



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

APR 21 1998

OFFICE OF  
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** National Remedy Review Board Recommendations for the Velsicol Chemical Superfund Site

**FROM:** Bruce K. Means, Chair  
National Remedy Review Board

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "BK Means", is written over the printed name and title of the sender.

**TO:** William E. Muno, Director  
Superfund Division  
EPA Region 5

**Purpose**

The National Remedy Review Board (NRRB) has completed its review of the proposed remedial action for the Velsicol Chemical Superfund site in St. Louis, Michigan. This memorandum documents the NRRB's advisory recommendations.

**Context for NRRB Review**

As you recall, the Administrator announced the NRRB as one of the October 1995 Superfund Administrative Reforms to help control remedy costs and promote consistent and cost-effective decisions. The NRRB furthers these goals by providing a cross-regional, management-level, "real time" review of high cost proposed response actions. The Board will review all proposed cleanup actions where: (1) the estimated cost of the preferred alternative exceeds \$30 million, or (2) the preferred alternative costs more than \$10 million and is 50% more expensive than the least-costly, protective, ARAR-compliant alternative.

The NRRB review evaluates the proposed actions for consistency with the National Contingency Plan and relevant Superfund policy and guidance. It focuses on the nature and complexity of the site; health and environmental risks; the range of alternatives that address site risks; the quality and reasonableness of the cost estimates for alternatives; Regional, State/tribal, and other stakeholder opinions on the proposed actions, and any other relevant factors.

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Generally, the NRRB makes “advisory recommendations” to the appropriate Regional decision maker before the Region issues the proposed plan. The Region will then include these recommendations in the Administrative Record for the site. While the Region is expected to give the Board’s recommendations substantial weight, other important factors, such as subsequent public comment or technical analyses of remedial options, may influence the final Regional decision. It is important to remember that the NRRB does not change the Agency’s current delegations or alter in any way the public’s role in site decisions.

## **NRRB Advisory Recommendations**

The NRRB reviewed the informational package for the site and discussed related issues with EPA RPM Beth Reiner, and Kim Sakowski of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality on March 31, 1998. Based on this review and discussion, the Board generally supports the proposed cleanup decision and offers the following comments.

- The information package presented to the Board did not explicitly indicate whether the Region’s preferred alternative will meet federal ambient water quality criteria and/or state surface water quality standards. The package also did not indicate whether any such criteria or standards are “applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements” (ARARs). The Region should clarify whether the criteria or standards are in fact ARARs and, if so, whether the remedy will meet or waive them.
- The Region’s preferred alternative currently presumes that all dredged material will be sent to a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Subtitle C landfill. The Board recommends that the Region determine the disposal facility design and operation criteria required to address the dredged material threats. These criteria should guide the Region in selecting appropriate disposal site(s) from among available RCRA Subtitle C, Subtitle D, and other landfill designs
- The Region’s preferred alternative addresses primarily DDT contamination in fish. The Region should discuss in its decision documents whether there are any other “contaminants of concern” for this site (e.g., HBB, PBB, TRIS) and document how the preferred remedy is protective for any such contaminants.
- The Region’s below-dam sediment samples do not indicate significant contamination: However, fish sampled below the dam do show contamination. The Board therefore recommends that the Region (1) better explain its conclusion that the preferred alternative will be protective for fish below the dam, and (2) continue to monitor contaminant levels in fish both above and below the dam. At a minimum, the significance of these levels should be evaluated in the 5-year review.

The NRRB appreciates the Region’s efforts to work closely with the State and community to identify the current proposed remedy. The Board members also express their appreciation to the Region for its participation in the review process. We encourage Region 5 management and staff to work with their Regional NRRB representative and the Region 5/7 Accelerated Response Center at Headquarters to discuss any appropriate follow-up actions.

Please do not hesitate to give me a call if you have any questions at 703-603-8815.

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cc: S. Luftig  
T. Fields  
B. Breen  
J. Woolford  
C. Hooks  
E. Cotsworth  
OERR Center Directors

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